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Summary record of the 10th meeting
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President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Vice-President) ..... (Belgium)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (*continued*) (A/72/124-E/2018/3, A/72/684-E/2018/7 and A/73/63-E/2018/8)

1. **The Deputy Secretary-General**, delivering the keynote address, expressed condolences, on behalf of the Council, for the loss of Ms. Una McCauley, United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Sri Lanka.

2. She recalled that, at the 9th meeting of the Council's current session, participants had highlighted the need to enhance the skill sets and promote greater coherence in the work of resident coordinators, and to formulate United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) that ensured the accountability of the United Nations development system for results and to host Governments. Fostering national ownership of UNDAFs was particularly critical in that regard. Participants had also emphasized the importance of adapting development activities to national priorities and of ensuring predictable funding for those activities, in line with the demand-driven model proposed by the Secretary-General. Successful examples of inter-agency coordination, such as the Joint Office in Cabo Verde, demonstrated the possibility of repositioning the Organization to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. A reinvigorated resident coordinator system was central to the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the United Nations development system in support of the 2030 Agenda and to the mandates emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Resident coordinators had one of the most challenging jobs at the United Nations, performing policy, programme, coordination and operational functions, all of which carried reputational risks for the Organization. They were responsible for coordinating the efforts of United Nations country teams with limited authority, resources and capacities and were often invited to contribute to national policymaking on development issues, despite the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for drawing on policy expertise from across the United Nations system. To effectively implement the 2030 Agenda, resident coordinators must ensure that the overall impact of the work of the development system was greater than that of its individual parts and, within country teams, must strike a balance between harnessing entity-specific expertise and encouraging cooperation among entities in support of national priorities.

4. To strengthen the resident coordinator system, the Secretary-General proposed to ensure that resident coordinators had the necessary authority, staffing capacity and access to seed funding to lead country teams in a results-oriented and accountable manner. Taking into account national priorities, resident coordinators would steer the substantive contributions of country teams to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; inform decision-making with regard to the presence and leadership of entities at the country level; and sign off on entity-specific country programme documents. A separation of the functions of resident coordinators and resident representatives of UNDP was also proposed in order to ensure that resident coordinators performed their functions in a transparent and accountable manner; to minimize real or perceived conflicts of interest; and to enable UNDP leadership to devote full attention to sustainable development mandates. In addition, a dual reporting system would be established to strengthen mutual accountability between resident coordinators and country teams for their work in support of the 2030 Agenda, while country team members would remain accountable to their respective entities. Lastly, the profile and functions of resident coordinators would be clarified on a country-by-country basis and the appointment process would be strengthened to ensure that resident coordinators had the skill sets required by country contexts, including those in which they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators and deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General.

5. Rather than reducing accountability to Member States, increased authority would enable resident coordinators to draw on the expertise of all United Nations entities in order to address country needs and priorities more effectively. National Governments would retain the prerogative to set development priorities; identify and draw on the capacities of entities relevant to their needs; and grant final clearance for resident coordinators to assume their duties. Improvements must also be made at the institutional level to ensure that cooperation among country team members was not solely dependent on personal relations and goodwill. Lastly, the Secretary-General proposed to ensure predictable funding for the resident coordinator system at a cost equivalent to only 1 per cent of the

annual contributions for operational activities for development, representing a strategic investment for the Organization.

Panel discussion: "Supporting United Nations country teams for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — in support of the field: a reinvigorated impartial and independent resident coordinator system"

6. **The President** asked how one might define the development-humanitarian nexus and characterize the challenges to its operationalization.

7. **Ms. Ruedas** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Sudan), panellist, said that, although reference was often made to a linear progression from humanitarian to development assistance, humanitarian, development and conflict prevention activities were typically conducted simultaneously in a given context, making it essential for all actors to work together in an effective and coordinated manner. For instance, reducing malnutrition, a priority identified in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Sudan, required activities in the health, education and production sectors and could therefore not be addressed through humanitarian work alone. Coordination between the Government, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, donors and the private sector was being enhanced in order to secure funding for activities across all work streams in support of those Sustainable Development Goals with greatest relevance to the Sudan. The capacities of resident coordinators should be strengthened but should always be targeted to the specific needs of the country in question.

8. **The President** asked what steps needed to be taken to delink the functions of resident coordinators and UNDP resident representatives, while ensuring that UNDP continued to serve as an integrating support platform for resident coordinators.

9. **Ms. del Carmen Sacasa** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for Peru), panellist, said that, although Peru was an upper-middle-income country, it continued to face challenges such as inequality, poverty and vulnerability to climate change, particularly in the northern and Amazon regions, making it necessary for the Resident Coordinator to perform multiple roles. For instance, her Office had recently deployed humanitarian task forces to address the impact of El Niño in the northern part of the country. The United Nations country team in Peru comprised 16 resident agencies and 8 non-resident agencies, of which 50 per cent were regional and subregional entities that provided critical expertise in assessing the impact on development of migration from neighbouring countries. The country team was focusing specifically on addressing the needs of youth; developing joint analytics and disaggregated data to target vulnerable populations; drawing on expertise and best practices to address development needs holistically; and moving beyond a sector-based approach for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was also working to reduce the incidence of anaemia and malnutrition, which affected 43.5 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 35 months. The new UNDAF for 2017–2021 was aligned with national priorities and the 2030 Agenda, and her Office was designing an open web portal with an interactive map illustrating development gaps and country team initiatives by geographical area, which would enable development partners to monitor progress in real time, thereby strengthening accountability. As the activities of United Nations development entities in Peru continued to be funded primarily by non-core resources, she was collaborating with the Government to leverage blended financing.

10. **The President** asked what challenges resident coordinators faced in coordinating activities across the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding pillars of the Organization's work and what role UNDP would play within the new organizational structure proposed by the Secretary-General.

11. **Mr. Wahba** (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that, as the former Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), he had had the opportunity to work across all three pillars of the Organization's work. While the capacities of resident coordinator offices needed to be strengthened, resident coordinators must also ensure that host countries received long-term development support following the closure of peacekeeping missions. Similarly, in seeking funding for its activities, the United Nations development system must work closely with Member States to ensure that priority was given to addressing not only the immediate aftermath of humanitarian crises, but also the medium- and long-term development needs that invariably contributed to such crises. In that regard, it was essential to promote broader understanding of the multiple factors contributing to challenges such as malnutrition, which was often caused not only by the non-availability of nutrient-rich foods but also by low income levels, as in the case of Yemen. Without wishing to pre-empt the Council's decisions with regard to the Secretary-General's proposals, he envisaged that UNDP

would serve as an integrating platform supporting resident coordinators in their coordination function and in carrying out operational activities.

12. **The President** requested further information on the implications and significance of the proposal, contained in chapter IV, section B, paragraph 64 of the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684-E/2018/7), to ensure that the authorities of resident coordinators in situations of humanitarian crisis or peacebuilding were clearly defined and to reinforce the accountability lines between resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in order to ensure that resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators were fully empowered to carry out humanitarian functions.

13. **Mr. Ging** (Director of the Division for Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), panellist, said that, in recent years, clearer terms of reference had been formulated for humanitarian country teams, which emphasized the importance of ensuring accountability for results; developing a common analysis of the situation on the ground; defining precise objectives to be achieved, in line with the 2030 Agenda, as well as individual and collective responsibilities in that regard; granting appropriate decision-making authority to leadership; and promoting mutual accountability between leadership and team members. It was also essential to ensure an integrated approach in countries where resident coordinators also served as humanitarian coordinators and as deputy special representatives of the Secretary-General, while respecting the separate mechanisms established for carrying out development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities.

14. Field operations should be underpinned by coherent support from Headquarters. In that regard, the recently established Joint Steering Committee to guide collective action by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for coordination of humanitarian assistance, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Administrator of UNDP serving as Vice-Chairs, would be critical for ensuring mutual accountability between Headquarters and the field. Indeed, the shortcomings of the Organization's humanitarian work in Haiti and Pakistan had clearly demonstrated the need for stronger leadership and responsiveness by Headquarters to the needs of field operations.

15. **Mr. Paust** (Germany) said that he would have appreciated a greater focus, in the Secretary-General's reports, on the role of a reinvigorated resident coordinator system in the context of the United Nations development system as a whole rather than in relation to the development-humanitarian nexus. He wished to know whether the strengthening of the resident coordinator system implied a reduction in the institutional and managerial authority of UNDG entities operating at the country level and, if so, what changes in the role of those entities were envisaged.

16. **Mr. Gad** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he agreed with the representative of Germany on the need for a broader examination of the relationship between the strengthened resident coordinator system and the wider United Nations development system. Resident coordinators must continue to give priority to promoting development, in particular eradicating poverty, and to implementing and fostering national ownership of UNDAFs.

17. Gender parity and geographical diversity would be critical for aligning resident coordinator skills and profiles with national sustainable development needs. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/243, resident coordinators must have the competencies needed to work across the development-humanitarian-peacebuilding continuum, as required by country contexts and in alignment with national priorities. Furthermore, the leadership and accountability of resident coordinators for the implementation of UNDAFs should be strengthened, and they should be empowered to make final decisions on UNDAF strategic objectives in consultation with Governments.

18. While the Group was in favour of common resource mobilization for country-level work, it would seek clarification with regard to the envisaged role of resident coordinators in leveraging pooled funding mechanisms. In addition, any increase in assessed contributions to cover the costs of a reinvigorated resident coordinator system should not impose a disproportionate burden on developing countries.

19. The matrixed reporting model proposed by the Secretary-General would ensure clear accountability lines between resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, including by guaranteeing that country team members reported to resident coordinators on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Resident coordinators should report regularly to the Secretary-General on the implementation of UNDAFs, with the scope, number and frequency of reports to be determined in consultation with host Governments, and more specific reporting requirements should be established in the case of resident coordinators who performed additional duties as humanitarian

coordinators and deputy special representatives. Moreover, the reporting channels through the regional directors of the entities of the United Nations development system should be clarified. While staffing requirements for resident coordinator offices should be agreed upon with host Governments, efforts must be made to recruit local staff. Lastly, the proposal to grant the Development Operations Coordination Office authority to manage and oversee the work of resident coordinators merited close consideration.

20. **Ms. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, asked which specific projects or programmes resident coordinators were implementing to support the transition of the United Nations development system from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to enhance the focus on the economic pillar of sustainable development. She also requested further information on the accountability lines between resident coordinators and host Governments and on the extent to which knowledge of the specific challenges faced by vulnerable countries, such as least developed countries, were taken into account in the resident coordinator selection process.

21. **Ms. Leyva Regueira** (Observer for Cuba) highlighted the importance of promoting strong leadership by Governments in addressing development priorities; preserving the development mandate of resident coordinators; guaranteeing the independence of United Nations development entities operating on the ground, particularly with regard to resource management; and ensuring the prerogative of Governments to communicate directly with those entities. She asked whether resident coordinators currently lacked adequate capacities to address development challenges and, if so, what steps the United Nations development system could take to strengthen them. She also wished to know what measures were being taken to strengthen the accountability of resident coordinators to national Governments.

22. **Mr. Bagwell** (United States of America) asked which qualities, skills and experiences resident coordinators required to serve as successful humanitarian coordinators and how those skills could be fostered within the resident coordinator system.

23. **Mr. Kulikov** (Russian Federation) asked whether the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain a minimum capacity of five substantive staff members in each resident coordinator office, with UNDP serving as an integrator platform, might result in conflict or duplication with existing arrangements for country team meetings. He also wondered about the specific challenges still posed by combining the roles of resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative, the extent of their independence under the new proposed system at the Headquarters and field levels, and how expenditures for UNDP and resident coordinators might now change.

24. **Mr. Alami** (Morocco) said that, while his delegation welcomed the proposed improvements to the resident coordinator system, he wondered whether a complete separation between the functions of resident coordinators and UNDP resident representatives would lead to the politicization of the role of resident coordinators, particularly in cases where they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators and deputy special representatives and were required to work alongside United Nations peacekeeping or political missions in conflict and post-conflict settings. He also asked whether the Deputy Secretary-General's role in overseeing inter-agency coordination and cooperation across the development-humanitarian nexus, with the support of UNDP, might increase the tendency to allocate a disproportionate share of financial resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, to the detriment of countries that required other types of support.

25. **Ms. Kenner** (United Kingdom) asked how operations at the field level would change if Member States agreed to enhance coordination across the development-humanitarian nexus, and what impact the lack of such an agreement would have on those most in need. She also asked how the panellists would respond to the concerns of those Member States that feared that increased coordination between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities would result in a diminished focus and reduction in the resources allocated to development activities.

26. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that it was useful first to define, on the basis of a shared analysis of the situation on the ground, the collective responsibilities of the United Nations development system in a given country context, and then to establish the specific responsibilities of individual development entities in accordance with their mandates and capacities. She asked what might enhance the willingness of UNDG entities to provide sustainable funding for United Nations country teams to play an integrating, rather than merely coordinating, role.

27. **Ms. Cheng** Hongying (China) said that any reforms of United Nations country teams and the resident coordinator system should be conducted in consultation with host countries, and that country teams

should be fully accountable to host countries in implementing UNDAFs. She wished to know how the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General would contribute to strengthening the development mandate of resident coordinators. Coordination across the peacebuilding-development-humanitarian nexus should be conducted in strict accordance with the mandates emanating from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In view of the imbalance in the funding allocated to humanitarian and development activities, she asked how funding for development could be increased in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

28. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Observer for Brazil) said that Brazil was in favour of empowering resident coordinators to lead country teams in line with UNDAF objectives and with ownership by Governments, while ensuring that existing reporting lines were maintained in the case of United Nations development system entities that performed functions beyond the scope of operational activities for development. He asked how Member States could exercise effective oversight of the resident coordinator system and provide regular guidance for its improvement, and to what extent the potential financial gains from a more streamlined country presence could support the strengthening of the resident coordinator system.

29. **Ms. Clifford** (Observer for Australia) asked which tools were needed to strengthen the role of resident coordinators in implementing UNDAFs, particularly in contexts in which they performed additional duties as humanitarian coordinators or deputy special representatives, and how such tools would contribute to promoting partnerships with actors outside the United Nations system.

30. **Ms. Benjasil** (Observer for Thailand) asked whether the panellists agreed that the number of staff in each resident coordinator office should be adjusted depending on the size and composition of United Nations country teams, the level of coordination required, and specific country contexts; and that the reconfiguration of resident coordinator offices should unlock savings that could be redeployed to funds and programmes.

31. **Ms. Fladby** (Norway) asked whether the provisions in General Assembly resolution 71/243 and the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the empowerment of resident coordinators would be sufficient to ensure that resident coordinators exercised the necessary leadership.

32. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) asked how the United Nations system could provide effective support for addressing long-term national development priorities, in particular through the implementation of UNDAFs.

33. **Ms. del Carmen Sacasa** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for Peru) said that, in order to ensure that resident coordinators were empowered, independent and impartial, they must have the required expertise and access to necessary financial resources to achieve UNDAF objectives, to which end joint funding mechanisms would be essential. The United Nations country team in Peru, in conjunction with the Government and the social sector, had developed a comprehensive UNDAF focusing on four priority areas.

34. With regard to accountability mechanisms, a recently established joint steering committee comprising representatives of development entities operating in Peru had submitted its first progress report to the Government in 2017. The Government was expected to take the lead in addressing national development priorities, while the country team focused primarily on fulfilling critical needs, in particular those of vulnerable populations and youth. She also met regularly with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs to discuss progress towards the goals established in the biannual work plans under the 2017–2021 UNDAF.

35. To be effective, resident coordinators required more standardized working methods, clearly defined reporting mechanisms, the authority to directly supervise programmes at the local level, and offices with sufficient capacity and expertise. For instance, her Office was currently collaborating with an expert from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Better coordination mechanisms for leveraging the expertise of regional commissions would also yield positive outcomes, as evidenced by the success of her Office's recent knowledge-sharing sessions with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other development entities operating in Peru.

36. To strengthen the emphasis on the economic pillar of sustainable development, her Office had coordinated the implementation of initiatives to promote the sale of quinoa at competitive prices on national and international markets and to assist indigenous populations in the Amazon region in marketing their native products. Moreover, with funding from the Government, the World Food Programme and the private sector, her Office was coordinating the production of a television programme focusing on collaboration between Peruvian chefs and local communities in the Andes and Amazon regions in

developing recipes using local ingredients in order to combat anaemia and malnutrition. A separation between the three pillars of the Organization's work was important in principle. However, the vulnerability of all countries to climate change meant that country teams, while retaining their primary focus on development, were often required to respond suddenly to humanitarian emergencies.

37. **Ms. Ruedas** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Sudan) said that striking the right balance of funding between humanitarian and development needs was not fundamentally the responsibility of the resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators but rather a matter for Member States to address in conjunction with them. It was also incumbent upon Member States to discuss how funding streams could be better coordinated and channelled towards a given situation. Many issues were a blend of both humanitarian and development aspects, while the funding provided often made an unhelpful distinction between the two. Pooled funds were extraordinarily useful as they were far more capable of responding to an evolving context than the usual mechanisms for funding and programming. Greater support for pooled mechanisms would provide a valuable tool in the arsenal of the resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators.

38. While cautioning against any simplistic approaches, she agreed that resident coordinators should be deployed to the countries to which they were best suited, according to their profiles, and where they could provide the best possible support. They were mandated to report regularly to host countries, which unquestionably retained their leadership roles in that relationship.

39. **Mr. Wahba** (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that being a resident coordinator was a full-time job and, from his own experience, resident coordinators simply did not have sufficient time to carry out additional duties as humanitarian coordinators or resident representatives. In his view, the most important qualities of successful resident coordinators were leadership, entrepreneurship, patience and a sense of humour.

40. Stressing that UNDAFs were only as good as the results framework that underpinned them, he said that truly empowered resident coordinators should have the capacity to bring together resources and results, and that Governments would be able to oversee their roles and measure the extent of the progress they had made. Strong resident coordinators would also be able to find development angles in all areas of activity, including across the humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors. They would therefore achieve more development benefits for host countries.

41. **Mr. Ging** (Director of the Division for Operations and Advocacy in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) said that persons in senior leadership positions must have operational experience in the humanitarian field, where the premium was on rapid decision-making. While most managers in the field had the requisite skills, it could still be difficult to move the best people into the positions where they were needed within the wider United Nations system because organizations naturally wanted to hold onto them. Under the new approach outlined by the Secretary-General everyone would need to assume a collective responsibility for making the best people available for leadership positions, and also for making those positions more attractive to them. The starting point for the new mindset should be contributing collectively to ending need and working together as efficiently and effectively as possible. Development system reform would increase accountability and value added across the board.

Panel discussion "Strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement"

42. **The President** asked what role was played by the United Nations Global Compact in the process of strengthening partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

43. **Mr. Power** (Deputy Director of the United Nations Global Compact), panellist, said that partnerships with the private sector would clearly be essential for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thankfully the 2030 Agenda was beginning to ripple through the private sector and the business community: 80 per cent of companies in the Global Compact believed that the Goals provided a compelling business framework for their strategies and objectives, and 75 per cent were already engaged in action to implement the 2030 Agenda.

44. Many companies in the Global Compact, large and small, saw the 2030 Agenda as a partnership agenda. While companies already benefited from a "passport for partnerships" to help them to navigate the system, it was clear that local needs for partnerships at the country level were still not being fully met. To address that challenge it would be important for local networks within the Global Compact to be involved in designing partnership pathways and approaches within countries so that a bottom-up locally designed approach was adopted, rather than one that was top-down.

45. As the importance of principles in relation to partnership arrangements could not be overstated, he

welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure the acceptance of the 10 principles of the Global Compact as a common partnership standard. Partnerships that failed to incorporate standards in such areas as human rights, labour, the environment and the fight against corruption risked undoing a lot of very important work.

46. **The President** requested further information about the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He wondered about the Network's view of the Secretary-General's proposal to create an integrity task force to manage risks of United Nations-business engagement and foster a pool of "partner-ready" companies.

47. **Ms. Manderino** (Associate Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network), panellist, accompanying her statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network had been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the Secretary-General. The Network mobilized global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development. Its Leadership Council had brought together sustainable development leaders from around the world. The Network now had a small secretariat with offices in New York, Paris and New Delhi.

48. The membership of the Network currently totalled some 700 institutions, which mainly consisted of universities as well as think tanks and research organizations working in partnership with businesses, civil society and Governments in over 100 countries. Many of the Network's members worked together in regional, national and thematic networks in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Members could use the Network's online knowledge-sharing platform to access best practices and solutions drawn from global studies and other members of the Network. In partnership with national Governments and United Nations teams, members could help to diagnose challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; mobilize young people from universities to use their creativity and knowledge to promote the Goals; carry out technical analysis of policies and plans; host participatory dialogues and forums to present objective options; and support monitoring and evaluation, among other activities.

49. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals required deep transformations in such sectors as energy, land use and food systems. For that reason, the Network had developed "pathways projects" which could help to ensure that short-term policies and investments were consistent with longer-term strategies. One pathways project aimed to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, for example, while another initiative addressed the lack of integrated analysis across the related food, agriculture, biodiversity, land use and energy sectors. The absence of a coordinated policy across those sectors made it more difficult for businesses to know where to invest.

50. Education was also vital for the realization of the Goals. In that respect, the Network had published a guide for stakeholders: *Getting Started with the Sustainable Development Goals*. It had also established an online education platform, the Sustainable Development Goals Academy, which included extensive free courses on the Goals. The Network was looking forward to expanding its partnership work at the country level with United Nations country teams.

51. **The President** was interested to hear the views of civil society regarding the Secretary-General's proposal to empower resident coordinator offices to serve as a one-stop-shop for partnerships with external partners.

52. **Ms. Adams** (Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Policy Forum), panellist, said that civil society organizations were natural allies of the United Nations in terms of addressing climate change, conserving biodiversity, promoting decent work and advancing women's rights. However, the question of how engagement by civil society was facilitated through partnerships, including by means of the proposed one-stop-shop, was a different matter.

53. To date, partnership had been one way in which civil society had engaged with the United Nations but it was not the primary way. While civil society had certainly been very active in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the level of its engagement at the country level was different from that at the resident coordinator level. Most civil society groups were aware of the Goals but were unlikely to know about UNDAFs, for example, although those were the primary interactive vehicle at the resident coordinator level.

54. A question worth asking was how to include the beneficiaries of partnerships in a partnership modality. After all, it was important to bear in mind that, in order to be a part of the Sustainable Development Goals, many people were dependent on different mechanisms in democratic governance and on the provision of essential public services. Another relevant question was how expectations for partnerships and the results delivered should actually be measured. In the context of the Goals, indicator 17.17.1, for example, referred to the amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships. However, in many cases that

indicator would be inadequate as a means of measuring stronger partnerships with civil society organizations at the country level. It was also worth noting that the approach taken to partnerships to date tended to treat the private sector as the "preferred partner".

55. Civil society organizations were looking for public resources to provide essential services. In their view, fair and progressive taxation was the primary means of leveraging resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They would therefore be very concerned if principles for partnerships did not exclude companies involved in tax avoidance or evasion, for instance, or those used as channels for illicit financial flows.

56. The key to successful engagement with civil society was the universality of the 2030 Agenda, which made it attractive to civil society as a whole. However, given the enormous diversity of civil society, she hesitated to claim to speak on behalf of all civil society and still had reservations about the ability of a one-stop shop to fully accommodate its various partnership needs.

57. **The President**, recalling the Secretary-General's proposal to strengthen the United Nations Office for Partnerships as the Organization's global gateway for partnerships, asked how partnerships could be improved between United Nations agencies and the business community.

58. **Mr. Wilson** (Permanent Observer of the International Chamber of Commerce to the United Nations), panellist, said that the concept of the United Nations Office for Partnerships acting as a gatekeeper might be well intentioned but would be unduly limiting if it was interpreted to mean controlling access to the United Nations. To effectively mobilize the kinds of partnerships envisaged by the 2030 Agenda for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations would need to reach out to businesses and engage them in areas where they could be of distinct added value through an inclusive approach.

59. An effective gatekeeper however would be a hub or one-stop-shop for businesses seeking to interact with the United Nations. In that capacity, the United Nations Office for Partnerships could act as a primary account manager that showed small and medium enterprises who to contact within the United Nations and how to engage effectively in partnerships. In that context, the Office should also highlight examples of best practice and reach out to the business community in search of areas where private sector involvement would be of genuine benefit to the United Nations, such as big data, or areas where there were opportunities to transform strategic partnerships in such core areas as food security and humanitarian relief.

60. **Mr. Kimmel** (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly encouraged the United Nations to view the private sector not only as a potential source of funding, but also as a source of expertise and innovation from which the Organization could learn to improve its work. As the private sector was a fundamental driver of prosperity, he would be interested to hear more about the comparative advantages of private sector engagement in voluntary partnerships.

61. **Mr. Elkhishin** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the United Nations development system had been mandated in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to assist Governments in leveraging their own partnerships. In that context, he asked how the United Nations development system could help Governments to achieve that outcome and ensure that partnership resources were aligned with national priorities and strategic programmes.

62. The Group wished to note that the Secretary-General's proposal to make resident coordinator offices country-level hubs for partnership went beyond General Assembly resolution 71/243, which did not provide for such a mandate. It was also unclear what role Governments would have in such a system.

63. Regarding the acceptance of the 10 principles of the Global Compact as a common partnership standard to strengthen system-wide integrity, the Group wished to stress that any such standards must be the outcome of intergovernmental processes.

64. South-South cooperation was a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, which remained the most important channel for mobilizing the resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group urged developed countries to make concrete efforts to fulfil and increase their official development assistance commitments.

65. Improvements in partnerships would allow the United Nations development system to address the diverse needs of different developing countries. Welcoming the proposal to enhance partnerships with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, the Group encouraged the incorporation of new and regional development banks in such arrangements and said that it would also appreciate further initiatives regarding complementary funding mechanisms.

66. **Ms. Chen Song** (China) said that partnerships provided solid support for the implementation of the

2030 Agenda. The private sector and other stakeholders could play an even bigger role in that respect, with the consent of Member States. However, the reform initiatives undertaken should fully reflect the fact that South-South cooperation remained a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South Cooperation.

67. **Mr. Engels** (Observer for the Netherlands) said that it was vital to expand partnerships with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He would particularly welcome more information on the potential role of the private sector in the context of the United Nations Global Compact and what the latter could do to ensure that potential partner companies complied with the Organization's due diligence standards.

68. **Ms. Steiger** (Observer for Switzerland) said that partnership arrangements with civil society would inevitably be complicated by the extent of the latter's sheer diversity. Academia, for example, was not represented on the panel. The 2030 Agenda was challenging hierarchical ideas about partnerships, in which one partner had more power than the other. The roles of donor and recipient Governments and other stakeholders, whether in civil society or the private sector, were also increasingly being questioned. A deeper understanding of such matters would help to further the discussion of partnerships and hopefully lead to the adoption of a less simplistic approach.

69. **Mr. Amin** (Afghanistan) said that his delegation attached great importance to partnerships as a means for least developed countries to achieve self-reliance and that the regional dimension of partnerships was particularly important for landlocked least developed countries. In that context, he wondered whether the regional dimension of partnerships could be identified as a cross-cutting idea in the six partnership-related work streams proposed by the Secretary-General and how it could be mainstreamed in the work of the United Nations Office for Partnerships to empower resident coordinator offices to serve as a one-stop-shop for partnerships.

70. **Mr. Paust** (Germany) said that while he supported the Secretary-General's overall approach to partnerships, he was concerned that the proposed one-stop-shop might risk overloading the resident coordinator offices.

71. **Ms. Haque** (Observer for Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, asked about the implications of the Secretary-General's proposal for resident coordinator offices to serve as central hubs for resource mobilization, and how his recommendations would impact existing mechanisms for collaboration.

72. **Ms. Clifford** (Observer for Australia) asked what constituted a good enabling environment for partnerships and what changes might be needed to achieve that outcome.

73. **Ms. Zahir** (Observer for Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that partnerships were vital for the successful implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. However, in view of the limited capacities of small island developing States, the way in which they engaged in those partnerships was equally important. The United Nations development system would therefore have a crucial role to play in facilitating partnerships. She would be particularly interested to hear how the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework would be incorporated into the Secretary-General's proposed recommendations. Rather than leveraging partnerships through the United Nations development system, a standardized system-wide approach to partnerships through the United Nations system as a whole might produce a more even playing field.

74. **Ms. Benjasil** (Observer for Thailand) said that while her delegation strongly supported the work of the United Nations Global Compact, its 10 principles might be too simple to use as a common partnership standard for the United Nations development system. Furthermore, given that each United Nations entity had its own specific mandate, due diligence standards for partnerships between the United Nations development system and the private sector could not be common across the board. A more sophisticated and differentiated approach would therefore be needed in that regard.

75. **Mr. Power** (Deputy Director of the United Nations Global Compact) said that companies committed to the United Nations Global Compact were required to produce an annual progress report describing the implementation of their relevant activities. Over 7,000 companies had been expelled from the Global Compact for a failure to demonstrate progress in relation to the 10 principles. However, many examples of best practices could be found in the thousands of reports available on the official website. Furthermore, the 10 principles themselves were derived from core United Nations declarations and conventions and had been endorsed by over 9,000 companies that were equally spread among developed, developing and least developed countries.

76. **Ms. Manderino** (Associate Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network)

said that while she supported the idea of an integrity task force to evaluate potential partners, it was also helpful to think more broadly about the meaning of "partner-ready" companies. The latter might encompass such concepts as a willingness to take a long-term view, to bridge cultural, financial and resource gaps, and to adapt business models to the realities of low-income countries. United Nations country teams could play a key role in helping to bridge gaps and facilitate partnerships.

77. **Mr. Wilson** (Permanent Observer of the International Chamber of Commerce to the United Nations) said that while a one-stop-shop could not be expected to manage every step of the partnership process, it could be effective as a primary account manager or facilitator which helped the United Nations to engage meaningfully with the private sector. He agreed that the private sector could provide more than pure financing and that the United Nations should look at ways in which the business community could add value to the work of the United Nations across the board.

78. **Ms. Adams** (Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Policy Forum) said that it was essential to engage all parts of civil society in partnerships, but that would be difficult to do with a one-size-fits-all approach. Nurturing partnerships was an entirely different role to the vetting or oversight of partnerships, for example, and those distinct activities could not be undertaken by the same entity. However, there appeared to be some conflation of those concepts in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/684-E/2018/7), particularly in paragraph 137 thereof. Furthermore, the 10 principles of the Global Compact predated the 2030 Agenda, did little to motivate civil society and were unlikely to work in the overall context of a one-stop-shop approach. She hoped that the partnership recommendations did not become the Achilles heel of the Secretary-General's proposed reforms, which otherwise enjoyed broad support.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.